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ABSTRACT

To asertain the long-term results of preservice courses in reading, a followup study was undertaken with 20 preservice teachers who had completed a 36-hour course entitled "Reading in the Secondary School." Students were given a reading attitude inventory at the beginning and at the end of the course and asked to complete the following assignments: (1) design an interest inventory, (2) design an informal reading inventory, (3) do a subjective and content analysis of a text, (4) apply two readability formulas to a text, (5) design a cloze test for a text, (6) develop a lesson to teach vocabulary specific to a subject, (7) develop a lesson to teach comprehension skills, (8) develop a lesson to teach study skills, (9) develop a directed reading lesson, and (10) relate to a school wide reading program. Following their internship year, students were asked to complete a questionnaire to determine how useful the reading course had been. Practices that could be related to the reading course were administration of an interest inventory, readability analyses of texts, reading guides, sustained silent reading, purpose setting for reading, questioning at different levels, oral reading to students, small group and pair experiences, concrete referents for new vocabulary, and emphasis on reading for understanding. Results showed that the students responded positively to most of the questions. Those questions that received a negative response were related to the use of informal reading inventories, readability formulas, cloze procedure, and directed reading activities. (Appendixes include a copy of the questionnaire and a scale to measure attitudes toward teaching reading in content classrooms.) (HOD)

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Effectiveness of a Preservice Course in Reading in the Secondary School

The long-term results of preservice courses are difficult to assess. Even though preservice teachers can, at the time of leaving a teacher training institution, demonstrate certain competencies there is an implicit assumption that once in a teaching position these individuals will not continue to practice these skills. The reasons for this vary; two obvious ones are lack of role models and lack of positive reinforcement. Experienced teachers do not demonstrate the strategies; therefore these strategies become devalued in the eyes of the new teacher.

In order to confirm the hypothesis that there is not transfer from the university setting to the classroom, a follow-up study was undertaken. Its purpose was to ascertain the extent to which skills, knowledge and attitudes toward teaching reading in secondary school classrooms was evidenced in teaching practice. Twenty preservice teachers had taken a thirty-six hour course entitled Reading in the Secondary School in the summer prior to an internship year. The course was divided into three sections: Students, Materials, and Instructional Strategies. The following assignments were done:

1) design an interest inventory for a subject
2) design an informal reading inventory for a text in a subject
3) do a subjective and content analysis of a text
4) apply two readability formulas to a text
5) design a cloze test for a text
6) develop a lesson to teach vocabulary specific to a subject
7) develop a lesson to teach comprehension skills
8) develop a lesson to teach study skills
9) develop a directed reading lesson
10) relate to a school-wide reading program

Students were given the Reading Attitude Inventory (Vaughn) at the beginning and end of the course.

During the internship year, the teachers taught in two rural communities. Informal feedback was obtained in the fall from several interviews and in the spring from observation of classroom teaching. When the teachers returned to the campus after eight months in the schools, a questionnaire was administered to determine how useful the reading course had been. Specifically, students were asked which skills they had utilized during their extended practicum. Results from this group and implications for preservice courses will be discussed.

Effectiveness of a Preservice Course in Reading in the Secondary School

Introduction

This paper will present the results of a questionnaire study on the effectiveness of a preservice course in Reading in the Secondary School. The course content and assignments will be described. The preservice teachers who participated will be discussed. Finally, the questionnaire results will be shared with accompanying implications.

The long-term results of preservice courses are difficult to assess. Even though preservice teachers can, at the time of leaving a teacher training institution, demonstrate certain competencies, there is an implicit assumption that once in a teaching position these individuals will not continue to practice these skills. The reasons for this vary; two obvious ones are lack of role models and lack of positive reinforcement. Experienced teachers do not demonstrate the strategies; therefore, these strategies become devalued in the eyes of the novice teacher.

In order to confirm the hypothesis that there is not transfer from the university setting to the classroom, a follow-up study was undertaken. Its purpose was to ascertain the extent to which skills, knowledge and attitudes toward teaching reading in secondary school classrooms was evidenced in teaching practice. Twenty preservice teachers had taken a thirty-six hour course entitled Reading in the Secondary School in the summer prior to an internship year. The course was divided into three sections: one, Students; two, Materials; and three, Instructional Strategies. Topics covered in the course were: beginning reading, reading in the content areas, the affective domain, standardized tests, informal tests, readability of text, goal setting, questioning procedures, vocabulary skills, comprehension

skills, study skills, the directed reading lesson, and school-wide reading programs. The recommended text was Brunner and Campbell's Participating in Secondary Reading, 1978.

The following assignments were done:

1) design an interest inventory for your subject.
2) design an informal reading inventory for a text in your subject.
3) do a subjective and content analysis of a text.
4) apply two readability formulas to a text.
5) design a cloze test for a text.
6) develop a lesson to teach vocabulary specific to your subject.
7) develop a lesson to teach comprehension skills.
8) develop a lesson to teach study skills.
9) develop a directed reading lesson.
10) relate to a school-wide reading program.

Students were given Vaughn's Reading Attitude Inventory at the beginning and end of the course.

Of the twenty students in the sample, seven were males, thirteen females. Two of the students were in the fifth year of a Bachelor of Education Program. The other eighteen held bachelors degrees in arts or science and were taking a one year professional year. Sixteen students had only one teaching area; four had two. Subjects taught and numbers in each were: Social Studies - six, Home Economics - six, English - five, Science - three, Physical Education - three, French - one. The students received the following grades in their preservice reading course: A (2), A- (2), B+ (10), B (6). The results of the Reading Attitude Inventory, pre and post were:

	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Low
Pre	4	9	5	2	0
Post	8	9	3	0	0

During the internship year, the interns taught in two rural communities. They spent five months in one school, three months in a different school. Informal feedback was obtained in the fall from several interviews on site and in the spring from observation of the classroom teaching of a sample of the group. Practices which could be related to the reading course were: administration of an interest inventory, readability analyses of texts, reading guides, sustained silent reading, purpose setting for reading, questioning at different levels, oral reading to students, small group and pair experiences, concrete referents for new vocabulary, and emphasis on reading for understanding. Of the final marks for practice teaching for the group, all but one were first class marks i.e., A+, A, or A-.

When the interns returned to the campus after eight months in the schools, a questionnaire was administered to determine how useful the reading course had been. Specifically, students were asked which skills they had utilized during their extended practicum. Seventeen of twenty completed the questionnaire anonymously. The results follow and are summarized in the accompanying table.

Question 1 - The Affective Domain - asked Did you administer an attitude or interest inventory to a class? Two wrote No; fifteen, Yes. Inventories were administered in every subject area. Four specified that attitude inventories were given; seven that interest inventories were given. When asked how the results of the inventory were used, interns answered that they:

- related material to students' experiences;
- incorporated students' ideas e.g., small group work;
- selected materials based on or related to interests.

Question 2 asked if and how interns attempted to motivate students. Sixteen answered that they tried to motivate by:

- making lessons applicable to their lives;
- using relevant examples;
- involving students;
- being enthusiastic;
- providing positive reinforcement.

Question 3 asked Did you use a variety of grouping patterns in your classroom? If yes, on what basis were groups established? Twelve who said yes explained that groups were set up by:

- academic ability;
- student choice;
- interest;
- variety of methods.

Question 4 was Were your students' standardized test scores available to you? If yes, what test(s) were used? How did the scores relate to student achievement in your class? The seven who responded Yes mentioned such tests as Nelson-Denny and Gates-MacGinitie. One explained that "students with low reading ability went to learning assistance." Another stated that scores did not relate to achievement at all.

Sixteen interns responded negatively to Question 5 Did you administer an informal reading inventory? The individual who answered Yes stated "confirmed that Grade 9 text was at suitable reading level." Similarly sixteen responded No to Did you use readability formulas to determine difficulty of new materials? (Question 6) However, all seventeen stated that they were

conscious of readability factors in teaching printed material (Question 7). Their instruction or expectations were influenced by their awareness in that:

- different novels were used for different students;
- difficult material was summarized by the teacher or another resource used;
- introduction of new vocabulary occurred prior to reading;
- parts of a text were rewritten by the teacher.

Question 8 Did you use cloze procedure as a comprehension measure or teaching device? received only three Yes responses. Results of Cloze tests were used to select materials and to practice and develop vocabulary and reading skills. Did you teach text attack skills? (Question 9) received eight Yes responses, nine No's. Those who did teach text attack emphasized:

- parts of a book;
- vocabulary in context;
- SQ3R.

Fourteen interns stated that Yes they did consider reading skills when establishing objectives for a lesson (Question 10). Ten indicated that students had problems reading their texts. In response to (Question 11) To what extent was teaching vocabulary an integral part of your lessons? only eight responded affirmatively. Techniques these interns used to teach vocabulary were brainstorming, oral and written definitions, audio-visual examples, dictionary, context, structural analysis, and phonics. On the other hand, fifteen interns stated that reading comprehension skills were important for understanding their subjects (Question 12). Of these, eight taught skills directly (explanation, demonstration) and seven taught indirectly (answering questions, following instructions). Fifteen interns instructed their students in study skills such as test-taking, SQ3R, memory techniques, good study habits (Question 13). Thirteen interns indicated

they did not use the Directed Reading Lesson format; (Question 14) as one stated "we were awash with so many lesson plan formats." The four who did use the D.R.L. approach added positive comments as to usefulness. Question 15 asked Did you see evidence of a school-wide concern for reading? Fourteen said Yes giving examples of learning assistance centres, library policies, Sustained Silent Reading programs, and concern by teachers about reading problems. Asked Did you receive input/feedback from other teachers about reading? (Question 16) ten said Yes. Comments were related to SSR, Reading and Learning Centres, readability of texts, techniques for dealing with poor readers. Sixteen interns noted that the reading course was valuable prior to teaching (Question 17). In addition, sixteen stated that they could see long-term results of the course for their own teaching (Question 18). Comments were wide-ranging:

- awareness that difficulties can arise from problems in reading;
- made me aware of the quality and readability levels of texts;
- advantages of inventories;
- making up questions on readings;
- selecting appropriate materials.

Implications

Considering the ten items to which the majority of students responded positively (1,2,3,7,10,13,15,17, and 18) these topics were presumably useful and should be retained. Of the four items to which response was split (4,9,11, and 16) two reflect the school situation rather than the interns. However, concern should be felt that vocabulary and text attack skills were not taught by more of the group. As for the four items to which the majority responded negatively (5,6,8, and 14), at least two causes can be hypothesized. Most students would have no reason to use readability formulas, cloze or

Table 1 - Questionnaire Results

		Yes	No
1.	Attitude or interest inventory	15	2
2.	Purpose setting/motivation	16	1
3.	Grouping patterns	12	5
4.	Standardized test scores	7	10
5.	Informal reading inventory	1	16
6.	Readability formulas	1	16
7.	Readability factors	17	0
8.	Cloze procedure	3	14
9.	Text attack skills	8	9
10.	Reading objectives	14	3
11.	Vocabulary skills	8	9
12.	Comprehension skills	15	2
13.	Study skills	15	2
14.	Directed Reading Lesson	4	13
15.	School-wide reading program	14	3
16.	Collegial input	10	7
17.	Value of course prior to teaching	16	1
18.	Long-term value of the course	16	1

iri's because they had no choice in the materials they were to use. Texts are prescribed and there are seldom options. However, the importance of readability factors implies that the concepts governing text difficulty are essential. The D.R.L. format can only be seen as a supplement to other procedures; it should not receive heavy emphasis.

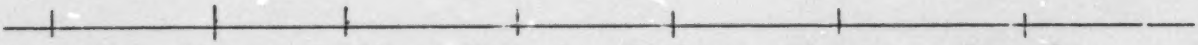
In general, the results of the study were extremely favorable. That is, they do not confirm the hypothesis that there is not transfer from the university setting to the classroom. However, a long-term study needs to be done on the usefulness over the years of the skills, knowledge and attitudes developed in the preservice course. Furthermore, it is not feasible to generalize from the results to assume that all preservice teachers would benefit as significantly from the course. The interns were an elite group in terms of selection procedures for entrance to the program, teaching success in the schools, and general enthusiasm for education. It is tempting to conclude that the value of the course has been established. However, the most that can be inferred from the data is that for certain highly motivated teachers the preservice reading course is effective.

A Scale to Measure Attitudes Toward Teaching Reading in Content Classrooms

(Joseph L. Vaughan, Jr. Journal of Reading, 20-7, April 1977, 605-609)

Indicate your feeling toward each of the following items by circling the appropriate response.

1. A content area teacher is obliged to help students improve their reading ability.

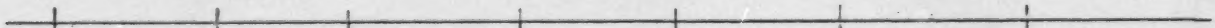


Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

2. Technical vocabulary should be introduced to students in content classes before they meet those terms in a reading passage.

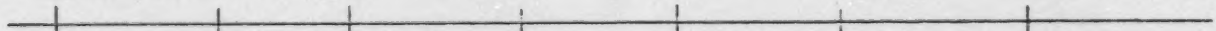
Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

3. The primary responsibility of a content teacher should be to impart subject matter knowledge.



Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

4. Few students can learn all they need to know about how to read in six years of schooling.

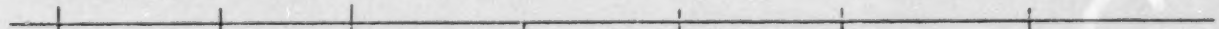


Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

5. The sole responsibility for teaching students how to study should lie with reading teachers.

Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

6. Knowing how to teach reading in content areas should be required for secondary teaching certification.



Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

7. Only English teachers should be responsible for teaching reading in secondary schools.

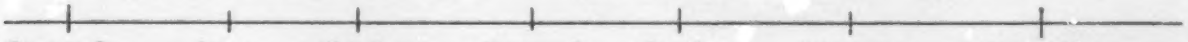
Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

8. A teacher who wants to improve students' interest in reading should show them that he or she likes to read.

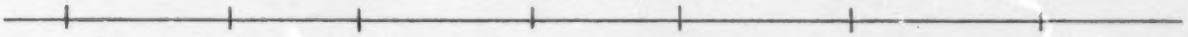
Strongly Agree | Agree | Tend to Agree | Neutral | Tend to Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

9. Content teachers should teach content and leave reading instruction to reading teachers.

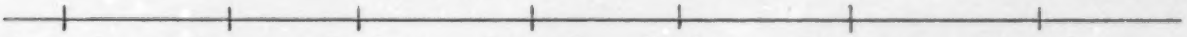
10. A content teacher should be responsible for helping students think on an interpretive level as well as a literal level when they read.



11. Content area teachers should feel a greater responsibility to the content they teach than to any reading instruction they may be able to provide.



12. Content area teachers should help students learn to set purposes for reading.



13. Every content area teacher should teach students how to read material in his or her content specialty.

14. Reading instruction in secondary schools is a waste of time.

15. Content area teachers should be familiar with theoretical concepts of the reading process.

Name: _____

Questionnaire on Application of Ed-B 343C to
Teaching Experience (1981-82)

When you took the course Reading in the Secondary School, you learned certain facts and skills. The purpose of this questionnaire is to see which of these you put into practice during the past year. Please answer as fully as possible. Your cooperation is appreciated.

1. The Affective Domain - did you administer an attitude or interest inventory to a class? No _____ Yes _____

   If yes, please specify subject(s), grade(s) and what use you made of the data.

   Discuss how you attempted to motivate students in your lessons.

   Did you consider Students' attitudes and/or interests in your planning? No/Yes. Be specific as to how.

   Did you use a variety of grouping patterns in your classroom? No/Yes
   If yes, on what basis were groups established?

2. Testing - were your students' standardized test scores available to you? No _____ Yes _____ If yes, what test (s) were used? Did you examine the scores? How did they relate to student achievement in your class?

   Did you administer an informal reading inventory for a text you used? No _____ Yes _____. If yes, how did you use the results? Did they confirm your expectations?

3. Textbooks - did you use readability formulas to determine difficulty of new materials? No/Yes Were you conscious of readability factors in teaching printed material? No/Yes If yes, how did this awareness influence your instruction, expectations, etc.?

   Did you use Cloze procedure as a comprehension measure or teaching device? No/Yes If yes, what use did you make of results?

Did you teach text attack skills? No/Yes Explain.

4. Instruction - did you consider reading skills when you established objectives for lessons? No/Yes To what extent were students competent in the reading skills they needed to read your text?

To what extent was teaching vocabulary an integral part of your lessons? Did you vary the techniques by which you taught vocabulary? No/Yes Specify.

Were reading comprehension skills important for understanding your subject? No/Yes Did you teach these directly or indirectly? No/Yes Explain.

Did you instruct students on study skills? No/Yes. Explain.

Was the format of a Directed Reading Lesson useful in planning lessons? No/Yes Discuss.

5. Reading in the secondary school. - did you see evidence of a school-wide concern for reading e.g., L.A.C., reading centre, USSR.? No/Yes Specify.

Did you receive input/feedback from other teachers about reading? No/Yes Explain.

What is your perception of the value of the reading course prior to teaching experience? What long term results of the course do you see for your own teaching? Please add anything you think would be useful for me to know in terms of teaching the course in the future.